

Professional Development Schools and Developing a Curriculum in the Making with Students

Brian D. Schultz
Northeastern Illinois University

Today, I have the pleasure of sharing a story with you about my experiences on a journey with young people from Chicago's Cabrini Green neighborhood. The quintessential point of what I want you to walk away with here is that, for me, curriculum is not all about what state boards of education decide is important for us to do with children. It's certainly not what a teacher is going to construct alone. It's certainly not fixed or finite. It's a journey of co-creation and looking to the students for what's worthwhile—what's worth knowing, doing, being, becoming, thinking about, pondering, wondering, and pondering some more (Schubert, 1986/1997).²

For me, that was what I wanted to do with the 10- to 12-year-olds in my classroom. What I plan to do this morning is to introduce this idea, let you hear from the students themselves through a video documentary they produced, and then come back to speak about how this idea of *curriculum in the making* evolved with the students. Through my discussion of this emergent curriculum, I will share many of the theoretical tenets that I drew on to think about how to do this with young people. My hope is that you may subsequently connect this work to your efforts within the professional development schools and the school-university partnerships you are cultivating.

Solving a Community Problem as Curriculum

What I'd like you to first do, though, before we even get started, is for you to think about a problem in your community. How you define your community is totally up to you. It could be

your local community and you could be thinking about the neighborhood park that's maybe not in as good condition as it should be, or it's about your global carbon footprint and how you can make sure that you're not wasting so much energy.

Take a moment. I'll give you five seconds or so to think about that. I won't quiz you or anything. But as you're thinking about this idea, I want you to think about how working to solve the problem that you identified could be considered a curriculum.

Okay, so time's up. When you think about this problem and how you would potentially solve it, how then do you envision a solution amidst all the high-stakes accountability that we have? All the NCLB requirements, all this über-testing phenomenon that we have today? How would you take that identified problem, something that was important for you, and then how you're thinking about solving it, and have it work as a curriculum within the frameworks as far as teaching within the United States? This process is exactly what I tried with the young people in my classroom. I looked to them to identify and solve a problem that was important to them.

Rather than me deciding what that problem would be, I posed the question to the fifth graders in my classroom. Within one hour's time, they came up with 89 different issues that affected them in their community, everything from litter in the park to teenage pregnancy to wanting a kid president. They came up with all different sorts of ideas, some more serious than others.

But when the students actually looked at the list of close to 100 unique issues, they realized that about half of them had to do with the shameful state—the dreadful inadequacy—of

their learning environment. They wanted a whole new school.³ That's what they decided to focus on. That one question became the epicenter, the nexus, for an entire year's curriculum (Schultz, 2008).

Troubling Social Location

I would be doing a disservice, though, if I didn't speak about myself, my own social location and my positionality against the backdrop of Cabrini Green. Cabrini Green is a neighborhood housing project in downtown Chicago that's in the midst of massive gentrification today. Because my race, my class, my privilege—a middle class, white male walking into a 99.9% African-American community that has been historically marginalized—is critical to understanding and making meaning about the journey my students and I were on together. Importantly, naming this reality is not about trying to figure out whether this is good or bad or right or wrong, but wrestling with this complexity is part of the bigger picture of teaching and learning with students (Delpit, 2006).

That positionality—who I am—bears a lot on how I must think about my relationships with the children, with the curriculum, with the community, with my colleagues, and school administrators. Oftentimes, when we think about places like Cabrini Green, the script is (unfortunately) already written. There are low expectations for the young people in the community. There are low expectations for the adults in the community as well.

For me, I was very frustrated by this idea, but I was also in touch with this situation. For me, I needed to problematize my positionality. I needed to trouble it, not in order to arrive at some conclusion, but because that process was part of what teaching, to me, is all about.

How could I start to think about—start to muddy those waters? Because rather than coming in with received wisdom and, "I know what's right for all of you," I needed to deliberate these issues with the young people.

So how can we try to create rigorous, high expectations for young people when we already know what the story line will be? With that, with that frame in mind, I'm going to show a short video to all of you. I'm no expert in documentary videos at all. The fifth graders in my classroom produced this. Actually, they looked to outside help because of my inadequate skills.

They produced this video and it's gone through several iterations even past the fifth-grade year because, among other things, they were invited to speak at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) two years ago and they decided to go back and do a compilation of multiple videos (with the assistance of a graduate student). This video was the result of their efforts.

I do have to say, though, I am always a little bit uncomfortable sharing the video with a group of education experts because you'll see my teaching in action. Honestly, I'm doing some awful reading instruction. I have to put that out there, right? Because I'm sure that some of you will say, "Oh my gosh, he's doing popcorn reading and he's correcting the children out loud in front of their peers." Reflecting on my teaching, I now see that I used some pretty inadequate teaching methods, and I now know there are better ways to do it. I am constantly learning those approaches and trying to help my future teachers think about the multiplicity of ways they can reach their students.⁴

In this case, my method of reading instruction happened to work. What you're going to hear at one point is my students reading an article from the *Chicago Tribune* that had just come off the presses that morning. They're struggling through it. I had vastly different reading levels in my classroom, from non-readers in this fifth-grade classroom to readers at a ninth-grade level.

The point that I bring out here is that my students were struggling. You'll hear it, but I also want to point out that I was struggling as a teacher, too. I think that that's important. There are other issues that arise in the video, too, but I will allow you to think about them as you watch and reflect on it. This is my set up for the video and for my attempt at teaching in ways that are

"in the making" with students. [To see the video documentary, go to the following web address: <http://www.neiu.edu/~bschultz/images/activist/activist.html>]

Not by Chance or Accident

Every time I see this video, I'm a bit dismayed—it's like shame on us, right? Like students need to show other people that they deserve a new school rather than that being the expectation that everybody deserves a safe learning environment—a place to flourish and to learn. Every time I see my former students say that, I get really frustrated.

The idea here is that a lot of things came into play to make this a reality, and it didn't happen by accident. It wasn't that I was trying to develop this yearlong curriculum that integrated all the subjects in fluid ways. It was a situation where I thought about the curriculum studies literature that I had been studying in my doctoral program and was wondering how I could bring it to life. It was so theoretical and often disconnected to the reality of teaching in a school, let alone a school that served the Cabrini Green neighborhood.

I was wondering about a lot of different things, one of which was the idea that teachers could be theorizers. I liked this stuff, but I was like, "What does this look like?" As I thought about the idea of teachers as theorizers, the idea that teachers constantly adjust and adapt and tailor the situation to the students in their classroom, to their abilities, to their interests—the students' interests—that made a lot of sense to me (Schubert, 1992; Schwab, 1978).

Teachers are certainly theorizers. I aspired to be a theorizer in the classroom, to conceive of a classroom that was culturally relevant and responsive to the students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). At the same time, I said, "Well, wait a second. If I could be a theorizer, why, too, couldn't my students theorize alongside me?" Why couldn't we theorize together? Because who was I to say what we should focus on—I was wrestling with these issues in many ways. I was a teacher teaching into the complexities of all that

reality, amidst all of those contextual factors. I wondered, "What does it look like when we theorize together?"⁵

These questions led me to this whole body of literature about integrated, emergent, and authentic curriculum. I was fascinated by this because I had heard all this rhetoric around integrated curriculum. At the beginning, I thought that it was that kind of curriculum where you connected math and science and threw a little bit of music in there and it is "called" an integrated curriculum. Certainly, this is an attempt at integrated curriculum.

However, going back to the literature from 100 years ago when John Dewey (1902) started writing about this and then looking to L. Thomas Hopkins (1937, 1976), for instance, and more recently to James Beane (1997; 2005) and Michael Apple (Apple & Beane, 2007), and the idea that an integrated curriculum actually says that the people most invested in it, the stake holders in that classroom, is where the integration comes.

It's within these spaces that you look to the students for what's most interesting to them. You ask them about their needs, what their wants and their desires are. From there, all those disciplines of knowledge, all those subject areas that we only do in school—we only arbitrarily separate the disciplines of knowledge in the school setting—they come together. From that point, if you're following the students' interests, you can connect all those subject areas—not in artificial ways, not in pre-planned ways, but because they emerge. They're emergent from that centerpiece, the children.⁶

Then, if there's an integrated and emergent curriculum, you're naturally doing things in authentic ways. You're not trying to create that authenticity. You're not contriving situations for authenticity. The authenticity happens. For me, I was so intrigued by the literature I was reading at the time that I felt guided toward this notion of democratic classrooms and democratic schools (Apple & Beane, 2007; Ayers, 2004, 2010; Meier, 2002).

But the problem was that when I got first into the classroom in Cabrini Green, I thought needed to be the boss. I needed to be in charge.

I needed to keep my students busy, right? My role as the teacher was to keep my students busy, right? If I could have them all sitting down together and quiet and listening to me, I was doing my job. But I didn't really feel very comfortable with that.

Actually, I felt extremely uncomfortable with that kind of teaching. It challenged many of the creative ideals that I wanted to have. What did it look like to share authority (Oyler, 1996) with the young people in my classroom? I had to be vulnerable. If I was on this pursuit of an emergent curriculum based on students' concerns, in this case, trying to appeal to the City of Chicago and the Board of Education to make good on that erstwhile promise of a new school, what does it look like to share authority?

I didn't know where we were headed. I didn't know what kind of barriers or obstacles we were going to have to overcome together. That put me in a precarious situation as a teacher. But it also had my students wholly invested in what was happening. Many came to school early and stayed late after school. Some even came in on the weekends. Why? Because they had an important problem that they wanted to solve.

I'll never forget when one of my students in the classroom was approached by a colleague saying, "I've never seen you do such amazing school work." He looked at him and quickly retorted, "This ain't no school work. This is important." I mean, it says a lot, right? It says a lot about how we think about education and what we do to our students or what we give to our students. And it certainly says a lot about what our students think.

That's what the public rhetoric right now focuses on, where teachers "give" knowledge to their students. The "bunch o' facts" curriculum, as Alfie Kohn (2004) refers to it, focuses on decontextualized, benign pieces of information rather than seeing the students as able beings and knowledge creators. These deficit orientations perpetuate the idea that students cannot assist or even create the curriculum. It devalues their humanity and, it's just wrong. It's completely inconceivable that this is the way

that we so often approach schooling and education today.

For me, how could I work to develop those shared authority spaces (Oyler, 1996; Schultz & Oyler, 2006) and trust that the students are going to pursue with rigor, with the same high expectations that I have of them and that they'll have of each other so that they can then try to solve a problem, try to reach a goal?

The goal that we're aspiring towards is a big one. It's a big social issue. It has to do with school funding. It has to do with inequity. It has to do with justice. But the ideas that the particular children in my classroom in Room 405 had a vested interest. I didn't have to figure out a way to motivate them. They were already self-motivated. I didn't need to bribe them with a pizza party at the end of the week in order to get through all of our problems. Because they wanted to be there. They wanted to do it. It was important to them.

This process led to questions about why these progressive educational ideals do not readily happen in historically marginalized places? I tried to dig through the literature and I although I did find some examples (Horton, Kohl & Kohl, 1997; Wood, 2005), but they were few and far between.

Most of the examples of this sort of progressive education, looking to the students for what was worthwhile, happened in more affluent communities. Not in places like Cabrini Green. Not in places where the mantras and public rhetoric was all about "back to the basics" in skills and deficit orientations, focusing on pathology and despair, rather than potential, possibility, and hopefulness, a hopefulness that I certainly saw with the 10- to 12-year-olds in my classroom.

But others did not. How could we challenge that? How could we write a counter narrative through our pursuits? Not because we wanted to write a counter narrative, but because we were performing one inevitably by resisting common assumptions. This was all about what I call inverting the curriculum: the idea of looking to the students to answer their own needs, their wants and desires, rather than telling them what was in their best interest.

Inverting the Curriculum

My fifth-grade students saw value in learning the skills. Let me characterize a couple examples. For instance, one of my students, when we were knee-deep in our contingent action plan, came into school and said—well, we were having a discussion. It was a brainstorming thing about different ways that we could keep on “getting the word out”, as the students said, to try to influence people with power to get us a new school building.

So, this student came in and argued, “We need them pizza things.” I did what lots of teachers do. I ignored him because I didn’t understand what he was talking about and I went on to the next student. He kept on saying it. He was persistent. He said, “We need to have them pizza things.” It wasn’t me that figured it out, but it was one of his peers that said, “You mean pie charts?” Because he started to explain that they’re in the newspapers, that they’re important, and that they prove things.⁷

I said, “Well, what do they prove?” He explained, “I don’t know, but people look at them in the newspapers and they’re important. We need them to prove our case.”

From that point on, the class tried to create them pizza things, and that became an opportunity for us, right? What do we do to create pie charts? Well, certainly I could have gone and created a lesson plan, right? I could have figured out all the materials required and written it up myself, but instead we started to think out loud and think out loud together. So the students developed a questionnaire. Immediately, they took that questionnaire, before I even had a say in it, down to the fourth-grade classroom.

They took it and they started aggregating the results of the questionnaire. They didn’t understand when they got their results back how they were going to create them pizza things. As they learned firsthand, it turns out that their questionnaire included all open-ended questions. Had I seen that before several of the children were down on the third floor of the school, I probably would have intervened, and said, “Oh no, no. If you want to do that, you need to control the situation. We need to have

closed-end responses.” But I didn’t have that opportunity.

Instead, it was an opportunity to do what I have called falling forward. It wasn’t a failure, because now we had an opportunity. The students re-created that questionnaire with closed-ended responses and took it out to some 300 people. The video included images of the pie charts they created.

Now they had all this data from all these questionnaires that they had collected. What to do with that? We talked about it. The students had used a program on the computer before, a survey tool. They decided to enter all their collected data into this survey tool.

I’ll never forget the moment when one of the students was in the computer lab, and he’s cursing out his computer, yelling at it, swearing at it. I didn’t understand. He’s mad because he says, “The girls won.” I didn’t understand what he was saying. He brings me over to his computer screen. I look at the monitor and he’s mad. He’s very upset. Looking at that pie chart, there was a bigger piece of the pie for girls than boys. The first question on their questionnaire was, “Are you a boy or a girl?”

I explained to him—it was an opportunity again, right, that teachable moment. I said, “When you have the most of something when we’re analyzing data, we call that the mode.” He looked at me like I was crazy. He proceeded to be upset. But from the back of the room, the student with, according to the state standardized test, one of the lowest achievements in mathematics, said, “The biggest problem with the school is the lunchroom. The lunchroom is the mode for the biggest problem that we have.”

He was looking at the data and he was understanding it. It wasn’t Chapter 10 in our math book where I would have made them memorize mean, median, and mode, which they had done in fourth grade and third grade as well, right? But now we were applying the data that belonged to them. The questions were theirs. The data collection was theirs. The input was theirs. Now it had purpose. It had a purpose to solving a problem they were invested in. Now they needed to disseminate that information

with them pizza things so that they could prove it to others as they had argued earlier.

The idea here is to think about how to cover the state standards, but not for their own sake. So often, we try to cover standards because that's what we're supposed to do. In Illinois, the number one reading standard for fifth graders is "reads with understanding". I don't know of any teacher, good, bad, or indifferent that gets up in front of a classroom and says, "Today, class, we're going to read without understanding." Right? The idea of "reads with understanding" is a goal we're aspiring towards. The question is how do we create the spaces and the opportunities in our classroom, challenge the students with the responsibility to get to that goal, rather than—and this happens in Chicago Public Schools all the time—the instance where a teacher is expected to write something like Standard 1A on the board, "reads with understanding," and that's what we're going to cover today. Why? Only because the book says we're supposed to cover that today, not because our students are struggling and we're trying to make sure that they have comprehension of the material.

I didn't need to fight with my students to cover these standards. Why? Because they wanted reach them on their own. The desire was there. They helped them solve their identified problem. For instance, later the students invited local legislators to visit their classroom and view the building, based on a letter that the students themselves had written saying, "We would like you to come see for yourself. We don't think you'd send your kids to a school that's falling apart like ours."

With those kinds of invitations, local legislators came in. I'll never forget this one boy, Demertrius, had done a lot of research on what it takes to get a new school and the cost involved. At the time, State Senator Miguel del Valle was in the classroom and he said to the students, "I don't think you all understand what it takes. I agree with you. You need a better place for learning. I agree with this, but," and he reached into his breast pocket of his sport coat to take out some materials.

He started to say, "You know what it costs to get a new school building?" Demertrius interrupted him and said, "Yeah, exactly. In Chicago public schools, it costs \$18 million to get a new school building. The capital improvement program for the school allocates this money." Quickly the state senator tucked the info away, acknowledging to the student, "You actually know more than me."

The point was that the students took this on themselves, not because of any requirements I was forcing on them as their teacher, but because the cause was important to them. I didn't need to force them to do things. They wanted to do it. That's what inverting the curriculum and providing spaces for a curriculum in the making with students is all about. We were able to cover these standards. We were able to produce something—a website or a video documentary—because the students saw value in it. Outsiders saw value in it.

We all saw value in reaching beyond the tired walls of the schoolhouse and entering the public sphere, where there are natural obstacles and barriers to overcome, where the mayor doesn't respond to you, or the CEO of the public schools keeps dismissing you every time you call and say, "We need you to come to our school. If you're in charge of the schools, you surely can come to our school, right? Isn't that what you do?"

But that wasn't what was happening. The young people were pushing back on a broken system. Clearly, in Chicago there's a broken system where we only graduate about 50% of students that start ninth grade. The students were intimately aware of situations like this. They were posing questions back that I think all of us should be posing back.

Relationships for Sustainability

When we think about this sort of curriculum, though, as I mentioned earlier, it's not something that happens by accident. But a teacher also needs to think about how to strategize in order to sustain and support this kind of teaching and thinking among instructors and

students alike. We need to find administrators that are willing to let us do that. The key is that you have to think seriously about it. You have to theorize as a teacher or a teacher-educator encouraging future teachers to do such things.

This process was about building relationships. If I could sum up my philosophy of teaching and education into one sentence, it's about building relationships. Maybe those relationships are with the children or with the parents or with the community or with the curriculum or with my colleagues and administrators. But it's the relationships that matter.

I had to find allies across the board, whether it was with my colleagues, with people in the broader community, or with my administration. Because so many people ask me, "How did you throw out the curriculum?" Then, as now, someone who studies curriculum, I say, "Well, what is curriculum, right?" It comes back to that definition I offered earlier, in terms of answering the big, broad question of what's worthwhile, not necessarily what we're going to do tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

When we think about developing those relationships, how did I figure out how to get my principal or my assistant principal to buy in? I had several different strategies, whether it was writing narrative reports for my principal that were a paragraph or two about what was happening, or it was never missing turning in my lesson plans even though they might have been embellished. It was doing those sorts of things so I didn't bring all this undue attention on me so that we could pursue what we needed to do.

It was about finding those allies and making sure to satisfy expectations in various ways, which I think was really key to following through on this sort of approach to developing curricula with students.

Quite honestly, when they picked the issue of getting a new school, I thought the students were going to pick a simpler problem like fruit punch at lunch or recess every day. I thought their chosen concern was going to be localized within the immediate school and its respective decision makers. But the students decided to

push well beyond that immediacy into areas where all those natural obstacles occur.

Learning from the Students

It's all fine and good for me to talk about this and share this experience and really relish in it for myself as a teacher, but we need to look further to what the students now say. They're seniors in high school now, a fact I share with you because only about half the students from Chicago tend to graduate, but this particular group of students sees the value in their education, sees the value in learning and as far as I understand have stuck it out.

Recently, several of the students have been writing with me a lot and they've also been presenting. They talk about a lot of different things that are really important to them and I think that I would not be doing them justice if I didn't share their big ideas and what they're now trying to teach teachers and teacher-educators about how they can engage and motivate city kids. In other places I have referred to this semi-jokingly as "kids as teacher educators."⁸

I'll mention these student-generated ideas briefly, which I think certainly reciprocate many of the ideas in the literature I discussed earlier and that served as the underpinnings for how I was attempting to theorize and make curriculum with them.

One of the big things the students talk about is the idea of choice. Having choices in the classroom is key to them. Recently, when one of the students was speaking at a conference, she said, "You know, never before in school have I had the opportunity to really choose what I wanted to study. Usually, it's about somebody kind of giving me some choices, maybe, but not really what I'm fascinated by, what I'm interested in, what I would like to take on."

I thought the idea of choice was intriguing, particularly in light of their next point: the idea of flexibility. If I go back to the literature myself, I look to the literature on choice and flexibility and they're often intertwined. The students

have a different definition. They're complementary, but they're different. Flexibility is the opportunity, as the students say, to be able to self-select the different roles that you have in the classroom.

For instance, the video documentary that you saw, you saw the students that decided to conceive of it, to storyboard it, to edit it. I would have thought that all the children in the classroom would have wanted to do a video documentary. They would have thought it was a great opportunity, right? But the idea is that I thought they *would've*—but not everybody did. Was my role as the teacher to force everybody to do the same thing? Because that's often something that we deliberate about as teacher-educators.

We talk about the idea of, should everybody have the same stuff? I know all of you will walk away with different things, even from the same ideas I'm sketching out for you right now. Different people, based on his or her life experiences, based on his or her own interests, based on things that he or she likes to do, are going to take away different ideas here. Isn't that the same thing that happens in a fifth-grade classroom? Should we force everybody to do petitions because we identified that as one of the action-planned components? Or, can we allow the students to teach each other after those that are most interested in it, engage in it more deeply?

I think those notions of choice and flexibility are very interesting because if I started to force students to do things, I think I would have lost them. I think that their interest and their motivation behind pursuing something that was especially important to them, not only because they just wanted to see a brand new school building, which they did, but also more so because they didn't want their little brothers and sisters to have to endure the same "dump of a school", as they had to. The project therefore was bigger than each individual. It was about reaching higher moral ground because the space, the opportunity, and the responsibility was theirs.

I've mentioned two big things the students speak about. The third idea that the students

talk about is the notion of community—of getting the community involved in the school and getting the school involved in the community. A student and I were writing a piece for a journal together. He was a tenth grader at the time. We were talking out loud and he was telling me what he valued most. His thoughts echoed John Dewey from 1915 about the importance of community. He was right on. The idea of bringing experts in, no matter what they held their expertise in, was key. Notions of how schooling and learning environments relate to the broader community was just as important. This tenth grader got it and he's telling everybody in this room or those who read that journal article exactly how important that was to him.

He said that it was the first time he had experienced people other than his parents or teachers caring about him and his fellow classmates. It was the first time, and he actually said, "It was better than getting candy at the candy store, which is something us fifth graders really like to do." The experience of feeling cared for was so valuable; even as adults we can see how much of an impact caring and nurturing and interest from outsiders makes on our experience of learning.

The idea was fascinating to me. It related to the next point the students brought up, which was the notion of parents being involved in the classroom. So often, I work with my future teachers or practicing teachers who are working on master's degrees, and they talk about the idea that parents are part of the problem. "If only the parents were more involved."

I hear that so often. I respond, "It's your responsibility not to just educate the children in your classroom, but it's to find ways to connect with the parents and bring the parents in. If you see it as a problem, then instead of having despair about it or complaining about it, let's work to solve it. How do we bridge those relationships? How do we find a way to connect the parents?"

I tried to reach out to the parents of every child on a regular basis, not just for the "Edward's doing something wrong in the classroom", but for the opportunity to share

updates, to explain what sorts of things we're engaged with, and perhaps address how the expertise of a parent could help us in our pursuit.

I tried to let the parents know they had an open door. It wasn't just the parent-teacher conference or when the child was acting up. It was much different than that, which was really key. The support of the parents for this sort of alternative way of thinking about curriculum was very important, as was having them not only have my back but also wanting their children to be successful in my classroom.

Related to all this, though, and for me it's a foundational piece here, is the idea of problem posing. One student in particular has been talking about it at every opportunity that he has whether as a guest lecturer in my college classes or at a conference. He says that schools should not be about what the teacher wants to teach or what the teacher is supposed to teach. School needs to be about what the kids want to know. Why don't you let the kids start asking questions, he queries, that are important to them rather than telling them what should be important to them.⁹

For me, as a curriculum studies scholar, that's a Paulo Freirian idea, right? (Freire, 2000). It's that idea of challenging banking notions of education and instead looking to the immediate participants for what they believe can help them. It's that notion of critical literacy, being able to read the world rather than just read the word. This particular student always talks about this problem posing and how he finds affirmation in the problem posing. But, he also tells folks that if you think what they did in this particular fifth-grade classroom was full of goodness, as something that you would maybe want to tell other people about, that's great. But don't miss the point here.

Because if you think that this is a good situation, that what this particular fifth-grade classroom did was important, what will you do when you leave this room? After hearing these remarks, what do you make of the situation? Because I would be willing to bet, he says, that in your communities and in your neighborhoods, there are schools just like our old school

that are falling apart, that the kids are expected to perform on tests without a safe and respectable place to learn.

They're supposed to perform equally but they don't necessarily have the resources equally.

So, he asks, what will you do? I'll leave that question to all of you. Thank you. **SUP**

Notes

1. This article was partly derived from and inspired by a keynote speech delivered at the NAPDS Conference in Orlando, Florida, March 2010. Although my talk did not directly discuss professional development schools or NAPDS specifically, the stories herein connect in meaningful ways to the "9 essentials" of school-university partnerships outlined by NAPDS. Throughout the text in representative rather than exhaustive places, footnotes have been inserted where I theorize how my ideas regarding "curriculum in the making" bridge with the NAPDS Essentials. © 2010 by Brian D. Schultz. All rights reserved.

2. Curricula has the possibility of being a catalyst in reaching the NAPDS Essential #1: *A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community.* When looking to what the students found worthwhile, the curriculum became larger than all of us. The mission of our classroom curriculum project focused on what students found relevant and important. This enactment went well beyond the intentions or expectations of any one group or entity. The curriculum promoted justice and advanced equity within the space of the classroom by being inclusive of the students' needs, wants, and desires which in turn profoundly affected the broader community and its inherent narrative.

3. How can our society have an expectation of equity (measured, for instance, through standardized test scores) without a foundation of equity (provided, for instance, through access to necessary, adequate, and fair resources for

learning)? The current climate surrounding testing, accountability, and competition for essential resources often frames educational crises as student deficiencies rather than a shameful resource distribution model. When students name the most pressing issue in their lives as an inadequate place for learning, perhaps the broader society could learn from NAPDS Essential #9: *Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures* for ways to think about and alter how we fund, recognize, reward, and in turn, label schools and the students within them.

4. In the self-deprecation of my own teaching prior to showing the students' video documentary raises important ideas about how we view expertise in our classrooms. Who is an expert? Why are those considered experts considered experts? Who gets to decide and why do they get to decide? NAPDS Essential #8: *Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings* addresses a possible avenue to (re)think and act on what role we, as educators in varying capacities and sites, can play in partnering and learning with one another. How can we do our work in more improved ways because of each other rather than in spite of or in competition with each other?

5. Whereas the relationship that the students and I had was informal and ever-evolving, a shared understanding emerged among us about how we approached our endeavors together. NAPDS Essential #6: *An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved* connects to this idea. Our roles as teacher-student/student-teacher might have challenged common assumptions about how teaching and learning should be enacted in urban classrooms, but we clearly deliberated about and realized specific roles and responsibilities as the key stakeholders of our own classroom community.

6. So often outsider perspectives get to decide what is “needed” by another. Rather than asking questions and allowing spaces for a group or individual to name their needs or their interests, someone in a position of power “decides” what is in the “best interest” of the

individual or group. Embracing the NAPDS Essential #3: *Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need* has vast potential in addressing these concerns. How do we collectively interpret “need” and why is important to allow the “need” to emerge from those most intimately involved in the situation rather than be decided for another? In this classroom case, my students’ genuine interests became the focus of our “professional development” instead of having that decided by outsiders for us.

7. The students understood the power and potential of reaching beyond the classroom walls. They wanted to influence others and understood how dissemination of their findings vis a vis their data and analysis could have a profound affect on making their case. Enacting a public pedagogy as a key component of the students’ curriculum emulates the NAPDS Essential #5: *Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants*.

8. Looking to NAPDS Essential #2: *A school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community* is a vivid reminder about why many educators do what we do. Having a robust, thriving school community is essential to nurturing young people. How we develop future educators in this concept get there is equally important. In developing the school-university culture that promotes active engagement we should also to look within classrooms—and the students inside them—as a way to nurture such cultures and induct our soon-to-be-teachers? Can students teach teachers and teacher educators while themselves learning? What are the trajectories of listening to, hearing, and learning from, with, and alongside students? If we are tempted to answer such through-line questions (and other complex and contested questions), might we then also embody NAPDS Essential #4: *A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants*.

9. There are many instantiations of reflection and collaboration in a democratic classroom where students and a teacher co-create

curriculum. The very premise of sharing authority within a classroom context is reflective of NAPDS Essential #7: *A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration.* Not only does the idea of looking to the young people as co-constructors of the curriculum have theoretical tenets in developing structures that embrace ongoing reflection and collaboration, but also a cornerstone is the ability for all stakeholders—inclusive to students—getting to make decisions and share in the ongoing governance of classroom decision making. In this particular case, the problem posing of a student pushes all of us to take seriously the potential of looking to students as key participants in our educational endeavors.

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Brian D. Schultz is associate professor, honors faculty, and associate chair of the Department of Educational Leadership & Development at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. His research focuses on students and teachers theorizing together, developing integrated curriculum based on the students' priority concerns, and curriculum as social action and public pedagogy. He is particularly interested in encouraging pre-service and practicing teachers to create democratic and progressive educational ideals in historically marginalized neighborhoods. Prior to his role at Northeastern, Brian taught middle level grades in Chicago's Cabrini Green neighborhood.